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Second Quarter Report to U.S. Agency for International Development

National Policy Association

April 1st – June 30th 2001

Working Group on Best Business Practices in Cuba

Grant No. LAG-G-00-00-00002-00

In the second quarter of 2001, NPA's Cuba Program Director and the Program Intern focused most of their energy on preparation and follow-up for the Second Annual International Conference on Best Business Practices for Foreign Investment in Cuba, continued to build a network of interested parties, and completed another issue of *Cuba Today*.

Second Annual International Conference on Best Business Practices for Foreign Investment in Cuba

NPA's International Working Group on Cuba created a partnership with FOCAL, the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, during the first quarter in order to plan for the Second Annual International Conference on Best Business Practices for Foreign Investment in Cuba. The conference was held June 1, 2001 at the Renaissance Montréal Hôtel in Montreal, Canada.

The conference was successful in attracting local and national attention to the issue of responsible foreign investment and the promotion of worker rights in Cuba. The panelists and participants included a balanced mixture of labor experts, foreign investors, human rights experts and academics. Agenda topics included responsible investment in Cuba, relationships between foreign investors and Cuban workers, the ability of foreign investors to promote worker rights, and implications for Cuban workers and investors of a democratic transition in Cuba. Case studies added enormous credibility to the agenda. NPA's partnership with The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) provided increased access to the Canadian audience and a greater degree of visibility in Canada.

Conference speakers included:

Julia Sagebien, Dalhousie University

Efrén Córdoba, Cuban labor expert

Charles Barrett, The Conference Board of Canada and NPA Working Group Chair

Nobina Robinson, The Canadian Foundation for the Americas

Phil Peters, Lexington Institute

Matias Travieso-Díaz, Shaw Pittman

Rod Lever, Export Development Corporation

Juan Carlos Espinosa, Center for Cuban Studies, St. Thomas University

Alberto Alvarez, Solidarity of Cuban Workers

David I. McMillan, VHI International Hoteliers

Anthony Quainton, National Policy Association

The agenda, participant list and conference summary are attached.

NPA Cuba Working Group

Members of the Working Group present at the conference met on the evening of Thursday, May 31, to assess progress since the Mexico City conference. The Working Group plans to meet again in Washington in November 2001. In conjunction with the next meeting, the Working Group plans to sponsor a half-day workshop on the promotion of worker rights and foreign investment in Cuba to raise awareness in the United States.

Cuba Today

The Spring 2001 issue of *Cuba Today* (attached), which focuses on worker issues related to Cuba's tourism industry, was published during the second quarter. This issue of *Cuba Today* is the first in a series of four which will examine industry-specific challenges to worker rights in the foreign investment sector on the island. The Spanish translation of the Spring 2001 issue of *Cuba Today* (attached) was also published during the second quarter.

The Cuba project intern gathered materials for the Summer 2001 issue of *Cuba Today*, which will be published during the third quarter. This forthcoming issue of *Cuba Today* will cover the agricultural sector of investment in Cuba and, as the last several issues, will be published in both Spanish and English. Additionally, research for the Fall 2001 issue, which will cover the labor issues involved in the telecommunications industry in Cuba, was begun. The Winter 2001 issue of *Cuba Today* will examine worker rights and issues specific to the mining industry in Cuba.

Cuba Project Intern

Jillian Frumkin completed her internship with the Cuba project on June 5, 2001. Jillian made enormous contributions to the program, including research on foreign investors in Cuba, expanding the database, and serving as the main contact for the *Cuba Today* newsletter.

Jonathan White (resume attached), a rising junior at Middlebury College, began his internship with NPA's Cuba program on June 5. Jon speaks Spanish and spent a month in Cuba studying under a Middlebury College program. He comes to NPA through an internship at the Institute for Experiential Learning (IEL) and will work four days a week through August 10. During Jon's short internship at NPA, he will assist the Program Director, serve as the main contact for the upcoming issue of *Cuba Today*, and complete a research paper detailing the history of labor in Cuba.

Cuba Today is now available on the NPA Cuba program website: www.cubabusinesspractices.org

Outside Meetings / Contacts

The Project Director met with a number of individuals and organizations during the second quarter to build support for the program and to increase our database of contacts. Ms. Bailey met with the following contacts to discuss strategies to promote worker rights in Cuba:

Jon Allen, Political Minister, Canadian Embassy to the US
Dennis Hays, Cuban-American National Foundation
Jonathan Moore, Canadian-American Business Council
Alfredo Corchado, *Dallas Morning News*
Eduardo Argil, KPMG Cárdenas Dosal (Mexico)
John Maisto, Western Hemisphere Affairs, National Security Council
Jason Feer, *CubaNews*
Guillermo Grenier, Florida International University
Stephen Halloway, Inter-American Development Bank
Guillermo Cueto, US-Cuba Business Council

Best Business Practices for Foreign Investment in Cuba
Conference Summary
June 1, 2001
Montreal, Quebec

At the second annual conference on "Best Business Practices in Cuba," held in Montreal on June 1, a broad range of speakers and participants worked to develop a realistic portrayal of the opportunities and pitfalls of doing business in today's Cuba. Co-sponsored by the *National Policy Association* (*NPA*) and the *Canadian Foundation for the Americas* (*FOCAL*), an independent policy organization that monitors and analyzes developments in the Americas, the meeting's overall purpose was to address the political risks associated with investing in Cuba and to examine the role of the private sector in revitalizing an independent labor sector.

A broad range of speakers and participants included both theoreticians and practitioners: academics, legal experts, policy experts, entrepreneurs, and investors. Despite their wide range of views, discussants agreed overall that Cuba, with its Socialist economic system and pervasive one-party government, is a challenging place in which to invest and to do business. Both political and economic risks abound. However, conferees whose firms currently are investing and those with some years of experience in Cuba contend that, after analyzing the risks, they are moving ahead with larger projects and investments. They were not shy about saying it is good to "make hay while the sun shines" in Cuba, that is, to get their business built up now while powerful U.S. corporations remain on the outside looking in.

Whether or not one agrees with doing business in Cuba now, hearing day-to-day details of starting and running foreign enterprises in Cuba was a unique opportunity to validate many of the policy-based assertions that circulate inside the Washington, D.C. beltway. For example, while the majority of foreign enterprises engage in joint ventures with specialized state-owned enterprises, Cuban managers themselves face challenges not found in capitalist economies. Increasingly they are under government pressure to improve efficiency, service, and profits. They often feel compelled to employ as many Cubans as possible, undermining efficiencies. Contracting for construction and supplies, importing equipment and supplies, and coordinating services are time-consuming and have delayed the completion of projects described at the conference.

The *NPA's Cuba Working Group* has focused on the conditions workers face in Cuba where there are neither independent labor organizations nor unions. At this conference, operators of foreign businesses in Cuba faced questions about how employers reconcile the Cuban employment regulations with accepted international labor practices. While admitting that labor conditions are not in accordance with international standards, conferees noted that Cubans are eager to work for the foreign enterprises because – despite the shortcomings – working conditions and take home pay are better than other opportunities on the island.

Matias Travieso-Diaz of *Shaw Pittman* led off the discussion with observations based on his years of legal and business experience in Cuba and in Latin America generally. Travieso-Diaz cited the very large potential for foreign investment in Cuba but noted challenges to investment like arbitrary government decisions that cause delays and uncertainty, and a lack of management control over labor costs. The Cuban government lacks incentive to improve the system because, Travieso-Diaz contends, it earns more from employees' salaries than from the new foreign investment itself. He has said that he has observed a slowdown in new foreign investment that he attributes to the Cuban government.

Rod Lever, political risk analyst with Canada's *Export Development Corporation*, also noted some Cuban government retrenchment on investment promotion and sustained opposition to greater privatization of enterprises. He attributes this to Cuba's confidence born of an improved economy and the belief that economic growth will be sustained without additional privatization. Lever also ticked off the risks to investors, but nonetheless predicted a gradual improvement in conditions for foreign investors.

Efrén Córdoba, former *International Labor Organization (ILO)* officer and university professor, noted many instances in which labor conditions in Cuba are in violation of ILO Conventions. He said that Cubans work under one of the world's most vigorous disciplinary systems which unfairly favors management in the business-versus-labor equation. He concluded that foreign investments have created economic growth in Cuba and many of the investments themselves have been profitable, but that this growth has neither influenced the Cuban labor movement positively nor contributed much to the democratization of Cuban society.

Phil Peters of the *Lexington Institute* spoke of the positive effects of Cuba's limited privatization program. He said a survey of those working in some 150 of the 160,000 licensed private operations in Cuba have an after-tax incomes 3.5 times those of the average Cuban worker. The result is that better goods and services are generally available. Regarding workers at foreign enterprises, he noted that, while workers are assigned by the government-operated employment agencies, informal recruitment based on referrals and requests does occur. Joint ventures surveyed tend to find ways to supplement their workers' pay, often through a profit sharing arrangement. Peters sees a positive effect of foreign enterprises in Cuba through the transfer of knowledge to Cubans in accounting practices, marketing, human relations management, and other such practices of companies based in capitalist systems.

Juan Carlos Espinosa, director of the *Felix Varela Center for Cuban Studies at St. Thomas University*, noted how "micro investments," for example funds provided as remittances to Cubans from relatives living abroad, have had a big impact on establishing Cuba's small private enterprises.

David McMillan, *VHI International Hoteliers*, spent eight years in Cuba working on various hotel developments. He is experienced in all aspects of enterprise development including financing, risk insurance, contracting, and operating new hotels. He described many of the common investment risks and noted that average labor costs on recent projects have more than doubled. He described his Cuba experiences as positive overall, and expressed satisfaction that the people he has been working with at the development level are likely to be tomorrow's leaders in Cuba. McMillan noted that success in an investment is enhanced by careful and patient negotiation of contracts and agreements up front. In his experience, Cubans abide meticulously by contracts, and errors at this stage can be hard to rectify. McMillan also believes that Cuban workers feel they are better off now than before and sees gradual change in the Cuba's labor system.

Special thanks goes to Robert Weekley, President of AmCham Cuba and Member of the NPA Cuba Working Group, who provided this conference summary.

**National Policy Association
and
The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)**

***Best Business Practices for
Foreign Investment in Cuba***

June 1, 2001 -- 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Mont-Royal II

Renaissance Montréal Hôtel, Montréal, Québec

AGENDA

8:30 a.m. **Continental Breakfast and Registration**

9:00 a.m. **Welcoming Remarks**

Charles Barrett, Chair, NPA Cuba Working Group

Nobina Robinson, Executive Director, The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)

9:15 a.m. **Working with the Cuban Labor System: A Risk Analysis of Doing Business**

Moderator: *Julia Sagebien, School of Business Administration, Dalhousie University*

Speakers: *Matias Travieso-Diaz, Partner, Shaw Pittman*

Rod Lever, Political Risk Analyst, Export Development Corporation

10:45 a.m. **Coffee Break**

11:00 a.m. **Change Within Cuba: Promoting Worker Rights, Sustainable Business and Alternative Economic Opportunities**

Moderator: *Charles Barrett, Chair, NPA Cuba Working Group*

Speakers: *Efrén Córdova, former ILO Official, former professor at Universidad de la Habana, Universidad de Puerto Rico, and Florida International University*

Phil Peters, Vice President, Lexington Institute

Juan Carlos Espinosa, Director, Father Felix Varela Center for Cuban Studies, St. Thomas University

12:45 p.m. **Luncheon – Le Floreal Room**

2:15 p.m. **Cuba in Transition**

Moderator: *Anthony C.E. Quainton, President and CEO, National Policy Association*

Speakers: *Alberto Álvarez, Solidaridad de Trabajadores Cubanos – Canada*

David I. McMillan CHA, VHI International Hoteliers

3:45 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

Best Business Practices for Foreign Investment in Cuba

Montreal, Quebec

June 1-1, 2001

ATTENDANCE

Speakers

Mr. Alberto Alvarez

Solidarity of Cuban Workers
Montreal, Quebec

Dr. Charles A. Barrett

Vice-President, Business Research
The Conference Board of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

Dr. Efren Cordoba

Former ILO Official
Key Biscayne, FL

Mr. Juan Carlos Espinosa

Director
Father Felix Varela Center for Cuban Studies
St. Thomas University
Miami, FL

Mr. Rod Lever

Political Risk Analyst
Export Development Corporation
Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. David McMillan

President
VHI International Hoteliers
Oakville, Ontario

Mr. Philip Peters

Vice President
Lexington Institute
Arlington, VA

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President and CEO
National Policy Association
Washington, DC

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Executive Director
Canadian Foundation for the Americas
FOCAL
Ottawa, Ontario

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School of Business Administration
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Mr. Matias F. Trávieso-Díaz

Partner
Shaw Pittman
Washington, DC

Attendees

Dr. Susan Babbitt

Professor of Philosophy
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

Mr. John S. Bailey

Assistant General Manager
International Banking
The Bank of Nova Scotia
Toronto, Ontario

Ms. Kaylin A. Bailey

International Program Associate
National Policy Association
Washington, DC

Professor Frederick Bird

Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec

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Montreal, Quebec

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Executive Director
Center for a Free Cuba
Washington, DC

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Desk Officer, Cuba
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Alexander Craig

Journalist
Lennoxville, Quebec

Mr. Geoffrey Creighton

Partner
Torys
Toronto, Ontario

Mr. Jacques Desruisseaux

President
DERUISO International Inc.
Charlesbourg, Quebec

Mr. Phil Doutre

Director
Hydra-Fab Fluid Power Inc.
Mississauga, Ontario

Mr. Paul Duchow

Lawyer
Montreal, Quebec

Ms. Jillian Frumkin

Program Assistant
National Policy Association
Washington, DC

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Québec, Québec

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Co-owner
The East Asia Co.
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Position Inc.
Montreal, Quebec

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Hull, Quebec

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Oxfam Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Kamel Issiakhem

Vice President
Interica Export
Brossard, Quebec

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Conseiller en Affaires Internationales
Government of Québec
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Québec, Québec

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Amnesty International Canada
Georgetown, Ontario

Ms. Colette Lavergne

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Montreal, Quebec

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Barrister and Solicitor
Stikeman Elliott
Montreal, Quebec

Dr. James E. Ross

Courtesy Professor and Program Advisor
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL

Ms. Leticia Rubello

Journalist

Ms. Daynah Savage

Associate
Capilano College
Montreal, Quebec

Ms. Johanne Savard

Association québécoise des amis de Cuba
Cap-Rouge, Quebec

Ms. Andrée Vachon

Market Information Intelligence
and Analysis Officer
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Montreal, Quebec

Mr. Michel Villeneuve

Director

Investments Export Americas

Fonds de solidarité FDQ

Montreal, Quebec

Mr. Michael Walsh

Association québécoise des amis de Cuba

Boischatel, Quebec

Ms. Cristina Warren

Program Manager

Research Forum on Cuba

FOCAL

Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Robert M. Weekley

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Washington, DC

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Charlotte, NC 28210
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EDUCATION

Fall 1999-present

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Middlebury, VT

- English major, Political Science and Spanish minors
- G.P.A. 3.7, College Scholar List (highest distinction) all semesters
- Study Abroad, "The Cuban Condition," Jan. 2001, Havana, Cuba

1986-1999

CHARLOTTE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Charlotte, NC

- Cum Laude Society Member, G.P.A. 4.0
- Earned International Baccalaureate Degree, spring 1999
- School Senator, Member Varsity Cross Country and Track teams

Fall 1997

THE MAINE COAST SEMESTER

Wiscasset, ME

- Participated in environmentally focused semester school
- Completed daily farm work program, weekly ecology field research

EXPERIENCE

Fall 1999-present

WRITER/EDITOR, THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Middlebury, VT

- Staff writer for news and features section
- Co-editor for features section, spring 2001

Summer 2000

CHICAGO TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY

Charlotte, NC

- Conducted database research, covered for administrative assistant, organized over 10,000 insurance files

Summer 2000

NATIONAL OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

Palmer, AK

- Learned wilderness travel essentials during 4 week, 100-mile trip
- Refined personal leadership and team-work skills through first-hand practice, discussions, and seminars

1999-2000

TUTOR, "Page 1" Program, Bristol Elementary School

Bristol, VT

- Tutored third-fifth grade students one afternoon/week

Summer 1998

VOLUNTEER, SEEDS FOR PROGRESS

Browning, MT

- Completed 100+ hours of service on Blackfeet Indian Reservation
- Worked closely with community leaders and families on projects
- Organized and led day-hikes for local youth in Glacier National Park

ADDITIONAL

Languages:

Spanish fluency with travel and study in Costa Rica and Cuba

Computer:

IBM compatible platforms, Microsoft Word, Internet research, Quark software

Clubs/Other:

Treasurer for "Causerie," a student-led discussion club at Middlebury College

Co-editor of book of faculty essays on diversity at Middlebury College

CUBA TODAY

Best Business Practices and Labor Rights

Spring 2001

Vol. 2, No. 1

INSIDE . . .

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Cuba Today presents a four-part series exploring foreign investment in Cuba. This issue looks at tourism, one of the country's largest and fastest-growing industries. Tourism is currently the island's number one hard currency earner.

Cuba Today serves as a forum for dialogue on the interactions between labor and business in Cuba. The tourism industry is especially illustrative of these dynamics as foreign investment surges, chal-

lenging the status quo of many Cuban workers.

The following articles on Cuba's tourism industry focus on promoting debate about best business practices in the region. Subsequent issues will explore agriculture, telecommunications, and heavy industry such as mining. Each sector is playing an increasingly lucrative role in the development of the Cuban economy and in the improvement of the quality of life for Cuban citizens.

Tourism Continues to Grow, but Profits Lag

by Jason Feer

Publisher, *CubaNews*

The number of tourists visiting Cuba in 2000 continued to rise, but the growth in profits slowed considerably. Cuba hosted 1.774 million tourists in 2000, well below the 2 million arrivals planned at the beginning of the year. Nevertheless, this number was 10.7 percent more than the 1.602 million visitors in 1999. However, Cuban officials say that total revenue from tourism increased by just \$16 million in 2000 to \$1.917 billion. This meant a meager increase of 0.8 percent over 1999's total.

Costs in the industry remain high, a concern for foreign investors. Official figures indicate that expenses account for \$0.78 of each dollar of tourism revenue. Total profits last year were \$421 million, about half of which went to foreign partners in tourism joint ventures. In terms of profitability, tourism is well behind the nickel industry and remittances from abroad, even though tourism is the country's largest earner of hard currency revenue. Cuban officials blame the decline in profitability on

the devaluation of the euro against the U.S. dollar, which has made trips to Cuba more expensive, as well as on higher air fares resulting from increased fuel costs.

However, expenditures for tourists have been dropping for some time. In 2000, per capita expenditures were \$1,080, down from \$1,186 in 1999. Per visitor expenditures have fallen for five consecutive years. There has been a 27 percent decrease since 1995.

One explanation for this drop is that Cuba tends to cater to low cost

packages for tourists. Although Tourism Minister Ibrahim Farradaz recently denied that Cuba was cutting its prices to attract more visitors, there is anecdotal evidence from some travel agents to the contrary. In addition, Cuba may be reducing prices for some entertainment and services in response to complaints that the island is too expensive.

Another major problem in the tourism sector is the very low rate of return visitors. Widespread complaints from tourists about poor service, mediocre food, and the high cost of everything from drinks to gasoline prevent many island visitors from coming back. Tourists in general appear to be willing to put up with such inconveniences if the destination is inexpensive, but Cuba is not much cheaper than other Caribbean vacation spots. Although the packages, which typically include airfare, room, and breakfast, are low cost, the Cubans try to compensate by charging high prices for drinks, food, and attractions.

Indications are that 2001 may be a good year for the tourist industry.

Major Tourism Indicators, 1988-99					
	Number of Visitors per year	Average Stay (Days)	Total Revenue (Mil. US\$)	Average Revenue per Tourist (US\$)	Spending per Tourist per Day (US\$)
1988	225,000	n/a	189.0	840.0	n/a
1989	326,000	n/a	204.0	625.8	n/a
1990	340,329	8.7	243.4	688.2	79.1
1991	424,041	8.7	387.4	948.1	109.0
1992	460,610	9.1	567.0	1,193.0	131.1
1993	546,023	9.6	720.0	1,318.7	137.4
1994	619,218	9.1	850.0	1,373.2	150.9
1995	745,495	8.7	1,100.0	1,474.5	169.5
1996	1,004,336	7.3	1,333.0	1,327.7	181.9
1997	1,170,083	11.3	1,543.0	1,318.7	116.7
1998	1,415,832	10.1	1,759.0	1,242.4	123.0
1999	1,602,000	11.0	1,901.0	1,185.9	107.8

Sources: Ministry of Tourism, Cepal, *CubaNews* estimates.

The number of arrivals in January grew by a reported 18 percent over January 2000. Nevertheless, the overall trend is a slowdown in the growth of tourism.

Several years ago, the government set a target of 20 percent annual growth for tourism and forecast 10 million visitors per year by 2010. It has since abandoned that goal in favor of an equally ambitious goal of 7 million tourists per year. Some officials have begun to say that 5 million is a more likely target for 2010. Foreign investors in the industry report

delays in new hotel construction, a trend confirmed by published reports in the official media. A 5 million level is attainable at the current construction rates and assuming only a 10 percent growth in the number of visitors per year. •

CubaNews is a monthly publication covering business and politics in Cuba. View issues online at www.cubanews.com. Look for commentary by Jason Feer in the next issue of *Cuba Today*, when he addresses systems of incentives, employee selection, and training processes that affect Cuban workers in foreign joint ventures.

Florida International University's Cuba Poll

The Florida International University's Cuba Poll measures the political attitudes of the Cuban-American community in Miami-Dade County. The poll is administered by the Center for Labor Research and Studies, the Institute of Public Opinion Research, and the Cuban Research Institute. From September 20 to October 17, 2000, three random samples of people were interviewed concerning their support of policies toward Cuba: 1,975 Miami-Dade County residents of Cuban descent; 400 non-Cuban county residents; and 400 U.S. residents nationwide. The results from survey Question 8, regarding opinion on U.S. investment in Cuba, are presented here.

Prohibiting U.S. Companies from Doing Business with Cuba

Do you [Strongly approve, mostly approve, mostly disapprove, or strongly disapprove]?

	Local Cubans	Local Non-Cubans	U.S. Nationals
Strongly approve	37.1%	23.5%	12.4%
Mostly approve	10.5	14.7	22.4
Mostly disapprove	12.3	14.8	33.2
Strongly disapprove	40.1	37.1	31.9

Further survey results can be found at <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/iper> or by contacting Dr. Guillermo J. Grenier, Director of the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University.

Cuban Workers in the Tourism Sector

by David I. McMillan, CHA

President, Venezia Hospitality International

When we arrived in Cuba in the Summer of 1994 in search of properties to manage, our guide was a multilingual, highly knowledgeable historian. A former senior official in the radio and telecommunications ministry, his current duty as consultant to the president of the country's largest hotel group allowed him access to the strategies and objectives of the global hotel industry. He was also a wood carver, a hobby that he perhaps honed during his stint as a sugar cane harvester, one of the jobs that had to be done by most for the "good of the country."

The first Cuban hotel executive housekeeper that I worked with was a trained engineer who could have easily filled both positions in any country. Among the 10 department heads were 6 professionals—engineers, teachers, and doctors.

My involvement in the Cuban hotel industry has spanned seven years with four of the five state-owned hotel groups in all of the provinces. Projects that have contributed most to my ongoing education in Cuba have included the management and upgrading of three small properties in the province of Granma, the execution of a national strategic planning session for the improvement of food products in hotels and restaurants, and the final negotiations and financing of a joint venture for the development and management of

The author has also been President of Cuban Club Resorts, Cuba's first joint venture development company involving hotel and vacation ownership. He is a former three-term chairman of the Hotel Association of Canada.

2,000 units of mixed use (hotel and time-share) in four beach locations. I have also evaluated numerous remote inns and hotels, a magnificent but ramshackle wooden resort on stilts, and four classic boutique hotels in Old Havana.

My current priority is the successful opening of a new 4 Star 690-unit resort on a beachfront lagoon in Cayo Coco that is scheduled to open in July 2001. This Canadian/Cuban joint venture features large rooms and mini-suites, chalet suites on stilts, specialty restaurants and bars, a cigar lounge on stilts, a disco, and a spa on a sparkling white sand beach.

The challenges of working in Cuba are significantly different from neighboring countries. Much of the reward for foreign managers and investors stems from interaction with the Cuban people in formal business dealings and in informal relations with workers and their families.

THE TOURISM WORKFORCE

Cuban workers are very well educated and have at a minimum a high school degree. Those in the tourism industry are eager to learn, disciplined, and responsive to guidance. In many cases, they are overqualified, have not been exposed to quality service as a customer, and respond slowly to the delegation of responsibility. These are not personality traits, but rather a systemic issue. What Cuban workers lack in exposure to high quality hospitality, they make up for

by a sincere welcome of foreign visitors, many of whom are greeted in their own language. Even U.S. visitors are openly welcomed.

Foreign companies in joint ventures do not directly hire their own workers. Government employment agencies act as recruitment centers, choosing the best candidates for the job in question. The employer has the ultimate choice. Unlike the situation with unions in other areas of the world, a sense of partnership appears to exist between the employment agency and management, even though the state systems are rigid. However, there are continual changes, and my general experience with employment agencies has been positive.

THE INCENTIVE SYSTEMS

The nature of incentives has changed over the years. In 1994, for example, financial incentives were forbidden; instead, incentives were in the form of rewards, such as dinner at a restaurant, vacation at a resort, or an educational trip abroad. Tips were not recognized or accepted, and expatriates and foreign managers were not reimbursed for tips when using an expense account. Today, incentives are a line item on a company's annual budget. They are, however, strictly controlled by a team (the agency, management, and the Communist Party) that measures performance and actual profits. Tips are now accepted and welcomed!

This evolution occurred partly because of the difficulty of retaining good employees in all-inclusive resorts whose tour operators promoted a no-tipping environment. Change also occurred because of the constant pressure from foreign partners to allow financial incentives. Nevertheless, travel agents and tour operators continue to promote that tips are not required in certain resorts.

Cubans like to work for tourist enterprises because of exposure to U.S. dollars that are used for payment of everything, including tips. Cuban workers have strong family and community values and tend to share tips with their families and neighbors.

Tips are not always in dollars. Visitors to Cuba often bring household items, clothing, medication, school supplies, and other useful goods that serve as a reward and thanks for the hospitality. Distribution of these "gifts" is formally handled, with acceptances made by, for example, a community leader or the head of a hospital. The Ministry of Labor is considering a plan in which a portion of the incentive would be paid in U.S. dollar equivalents.

Vacation ownership in Cuba in the form of time-sharing, which has been approved but not yet set up, will pose a dilemma. The time-share industry relies heavily on individual commissions in sales and marketing where employees and managers earn high incomes based on performance. This issue has not yet been resolved in Cuba, but there have been informal discussions of setting up a system whereby employees earn points that can be used to purchase dollar-based goods in the "company store."

Slowly, the more typical Western approach to motivation and reward is becoming part of Cuba's incentive systems.

SALARY SCALES

There is little negotiation of salary ranges and benefits. Salaries paid in pesos are based on position, exposure to guests, and category of hotel. They are then marked up by agency fees, social contributions (i.e., an amount for toothpaste, shaving gear, and other small luxuries), vacation time, transportation to work, and lodging for nonlocal employees. The total paid by the joint venture covers the gross amount to be paid to the agency and a percentage surcharge for the joint venture. The gross Cuban peso amounts are then paid to the agency in U.S. dollars on a one-to-one ratio.

Because the state benefits from the hard currency earned by Cuban employees in a foreign joint venture, it is critical for the state to maintain control over the number and productivity of workers in the tourist sector. Similar to most countries in the Caribbean and Latin America, Cuba has a high ratio of workers per room available.

Note the following facts:

- Employees in Cuban-run hotels earn less than their counterparts in foreign-managed properties; thus, employees are more interested in working for a joint venture.
- Foreign employers do not control compensation; all compensation, not just the minimum wage, is fixed. However, investors have some flexibility in the negotiation stage.

- The state profits more than the foreign investor from 50-50 ventures. Further, the state currently benefits more from foreign currency income than from shares from joint venture dividends.
- Salaries in the tourism industry have increased significantly in the past five years, whereas room rates have not.
- The value of the peso has increased—from 125 pesos/U.S. dollar in 1994 to 22 in 2001. The peso has also moved from the black market to become the official currency for businesses.
- All hotel contracts are paid in dollars; thus, hotel contracts for gas, electricity, or security, for example, are dollar-earners for the local state-owned service provider.

It is relevant to point out that an assistant manager in a Cuban joint venture resort may earn more than the president of the Cuban hotel company that hired the assistant.

SUCCESS AS WELL AS NEEDED CHANGES

Investors in the hotel industry are generally satisfied with these changes. While further changes are needed, they will be made only if deemed central to the overall plan of the Cuban state and in keeping with socialism's ideologies. Those at the senior and junior level in Cuba's tourist sector are generally very supportive of joint ventures and help them work within the system.

With tourism growing at an average rate of 19.3 percent since 1993, it is clearly an industry that is earning hard currency. This burgeoning industry has also allowed more and

(Continued on page 6)

State Control and the Tourism Industry

by Denise Sibley

*Instructor, Business Administration,
Mississippi University for Women*

In a restaurant in Cuba, you could be shown to your table by a civil engineer, give your order to a computer programmer, and have your meal prepared by an attorney. Cuba's booming tourism industry is where the money is for young Cubans hoping to achieve more financial freedom.

Most Cubans, regardless of their education, make about U.S.\$20 to \$24 a month. While employees in the tourism sector earn only a little more, about \$30 a month, they have the benefit of receiving tips, which can be substantial. For example, the civil engineer noted above received a \$100 tip from just one customer. The earnings from tips explain why young Cuban professionals elect to work in the tourism industry rather than in their area of study. Even so, some are so disappointed about the lack of jobs in their profession that they leave their homeland for work and adequate compensation in their chosen field in other countries.

GETTING EMPLOYED IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Cuban hotels and restaurants do not have trouble filling the positions of housekeeper, waiter, cook, bartender, hostess, or activity director. But getting one of these jobs is not an easy task. Applicants eager to work in

tourism must first be accepted by a Formatur School. Founded in 1995, 18 Formatur Schools provide an extensive training program for employees in the ever-growing tourism industry. Concentrated in areas of heavy tourism, the schools focus on the specific type of tourism in that region. For example, the schools around Varadero mainly train students to work in resort properties because resorts are prevalent in that area of Cuba.

The demand for specific jobs determines the number of students who are admitted to a Formatur School. For instance, if a local hotel needs 20 waitresses, the school enrolls 20 students. Applicants must undergo a screening process to determine their eligibility. They must also be high school graduates and under age 35. In addition, the student must live in the same locale as the school and the prospective place of employment. Those who are accepted by a Formatur School usually have political connections.

The Training Process

Regardless of their previous education (many applicants already have a degree from a four-year university), students attending a Formatur School receive two years of training. The only exception is the one-year training period for housekeeping positions. Thirty percent of the training is devoted to theory, with the rest of the time being spent on practical application. Many students work in their

prospective positions as part of their training. While in training, they receive no compensation other than tips. They are closely supervised, and their progress is reported to the school. It is not unusual for a student to be asked to leave the program before completion because he or she has not met the school's standards.

This employment process is somewhat inscrutable. The training period seems unduly long. Also, many hotels and restaurants are over-staffed. At one hotel in Havana, for example, four employees usually run the small snack bar in the lobby, and three or four doormen are on duty at the hotel entrance at all times. Despite the lengthy training period and numerous staff, service in Cuban hotels and restaurants is not always prompt. Staff sometimes seem almost reluctant to offer service; once they are asked, however, they appear more than willing to be of assistance.

THE CTC AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION

Many of the hotels and resorts are joint ventures with foreign investors, with some managed by the foreign investment company. Except for some upper management positions, the majority of the employees are Cubans. Almost all belong to one union, the Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), which represents the 3 million union members of Cuba who are organized in 19 national unions. Union membership is encouraged,

The author is working on her doctorate in International Development at the University of Southern Mississippi.

and every workplace is organized. Employees periodically meet with the CTC to discuss issues they want management to address, which the union officials then relay to management.

The Cuban union movement encompasses over 97 percent of Cuba's workers. The CTC is controlled by the state and the Communist Party, which are also the managers of the enterprises that employ the laborers. The Cuban Communist Party is based on and represents the working class. The head of the CTC is a member of the Communist Party's political bureau, its highest body.

The CTC's Functions

Views differ concerning the functions of the CTC. According to the socialist state, the working class is in power and runs society. Unions advocate for the workers in a cooperative relationship with the socialist government. In the sectors of Cuba (such as tourism) where workers are employed in joint ventures, the Cuban Ministry of Labor operates a special office—in some ways similar to a union hiring hall—that provides labor for the foreign corporations. This practice, in effect, prevents the companies from hiring workers of their

choice. If a problem develops with a worker, the company must discuss it with the Cuban manager and the union. If the worker needs training or replacement, he or she returns to the Ministry of Labor office.

A recent report by the U.S. State Department presents a different view. Foreign investors who engage in joint ventures with the Cuban government are carefully controlled. As noted, investors must hire their workers through the state employment agencies. The Cuban government appropriates about 95 percent of the salaries of these workers and pays them in domestic currency while charging the joint venture in hard currency.

It is the CTC's responsibility to ensure that government production goals are met. The CTC does not act as a trade union: it does not promote worker rights or observance of labor law, and it does not protect the right to strike.

Workers who attempt to engage in nongovernmental union activities face government harassment and persecution, even though the state disclaims these practices in international forums. Workers have lost their jobs for their political beliefs, including refusal to join the official union. Al-

though several small independent labor organizations have been formed, they function without legal recognition and cannot represent workers effectively. They, too, are constantly harassed by the government.

PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The Arcos Principles, named for the prominent activist Gustavo Arcos who heads the Cuban Committee for Human Rights, seek to promote fair labor hiring and employment practices in Cuba. The principles want all Cubans to be allowed access to the public areas, goods, and services that are currently reserved for foreigners. The principles insist that Cubans working for joint ventures be hired directly. They urge an end to the use of school and labor records of political and social conduct when hiring workers. They call for fair labor standards, including a reasonable work day and week, an end to "voluntary" labor, and the right to form labor unions independent of the government. The Arcos Principles also call for measures to improve workplace safety and environmental protection. •

(McMillan continued from page 4)

more foreign visitors to see that life in Cuba is very different from how it is depicted in the Western media.

Few countries have undergone as much change as Cuba in as little time. Nevertheless, further change is necessary in certain areas if Cuba is to keep pace with the growth in tourism.

First, Cuba's architecturally rich heritage should be reflected in some

way in the design of its new hotels and resorts. Second, in a country well endowed in the arts, it would be advantageous and competitively wise to bring culture and tourism closer together. This would help in the development of tourism from a simple "sun and sand" experience to one in which the visitor can explore the incredible talents in Cuban society.

Third, Cuba currently relies heavily on a simple marketing distribution system that will have to be diversified as Cuba moves forward to compete with the giants in world tourism. In the meantime, Cuba's human resources in the tourism sector are well positioned to meet the future. •

NPA's Cuba Working Group— “Principles for Private Sector Investment in Cuba”

The international private sector has a vital role to play in promoting open, free market institutions and adherence to universal standards of human rights. Because we, the international Working Group on Best Business Practices in Cuba, believe that socially responsible business practices can foster human rights and, ultimately, a more productive workforce, we urge businesses investing in Cuba to adopt such practices in their activities in Cuba.

We recognize that the situation in Cuba is dynamic and that the challenges facing private sector involvement are many. While operating in a manner consistent with current Cuban laws and regulations, companies should nevertheless respect fundamental worker rights and advocate changes in laws and regulations where adherence to these rights is not currently possible.

Our principles are based on the Arcos Principles (1994), NPA's North American Committee Principles (1997), the Sullivan, the McBride, and other socially responsible principles that have served as a catalyst for progress in nondemocratic societies. We encourage the private sector to voluntarily adopt the following basic principles:

- respect the right of the workers to organize freely in the workplace and to choose a union to represent them in negotiations with management, in accordance with the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions 87 and 98;
- maintain a corporate culture that respects free expression consistent with legitimate business concerns and does not condone political coercion in the workplace;

- work to gain the right to recruit, contract, pay, and promote workers directly, not through government intermediaries;
- employ socially responsible employment practices, including the avoidance of child and forced labor and discrimination based on race, gender, national origin, religious beliefs, or political beliefs or affiliation, in accordance with ILO Convention 111;
- provide a safe and healthy workplace, consistent with the principles of sustainable development; and
- support the strengthening of legal procedures, encouraging respect for due process, human rights, and the international conventions of which Cuba is a signatory.

Pax Christi Netherlands on Tourism

The Cuban government tries to limit the impact of tourism on Cuban society as much as possible. Apart from some minor positive side effects of the increase in tourism, the Cuban people do not experience an opening up of society or an improvement in their living standard. With the current strategy, tourism in Cuba is mainly benefiting the government [which] hopes that economic development, coupled with strong internal control, will strengthen the regime's long-term viability. But the government cannot control all tourists as it does its own people, and even Cuban society has become more critical of the measures taken by the government.

Reprinted from Fifth Report on Cuba, by Pax Christi Netherlands (Utrecht, Sept. 2000), p. 17; reprinted by permission.

Members of the Cuba Working Group

- AFL-CIO American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)
- American Chamber of Commerce of Cuba in the United States (AmCham Cuba)
- Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW)
- Consejo Mexicano de Comercio Exterior (COMCE)
- The Conference Board of Canada
- Florida International University
- Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM)
- National Policy Association
- Pax Christi Netherlands
- Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum
- United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Cuba Business Council

Second Annual International Conference on "Best Business Practices in Cuba"

NPA's international Working Group on Cuba will hold its second annual conference on "Best Business Practices in Cuba" on June 1, 2001, at the Renaissance Montreal Hôtel in Montreal, Canada. The first conference took place in Mexico City in June 2000.

Cosponsored by the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), the conference will gather current and potential investors in Cuba to address the political risks associated with in-

vesting in Cuba. Participants will also examine the role of the private sector in revitalizing an independent labor sector.

Confirmed speakers include Alberto Alvarez (Solidarity of Cuban Workers), Efrén Córdova, Gareth Jenkins (Cuba Business Solutions), David I. McMillan (Venezia Hospitality International), Philip Peters (Lexington Institute), and Matias Travieso (Shaw Pittman).

FOCAL is a policy center dedicated to strengthening Canada's relations with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean through informed policy discussion and analysis. For information on FOCAL and its Research Forum on Cuba, visit www.focal.ca.

For more information on the upcoming conference, contact Kaylin Bailey, NPA International Program Associate and Cuba Program Director, at kbailey@npa1.org or (202) 884-7640.

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Cuba Today presenta una serie de cuatro partes que explora la inversión extranjera en Cuba. Este número está dedicado al turismo, una de las industrias más grandes y de más rápido crecimiento del país. El turismo es hoy en día el ganador número uno de dinero en efectivo de la isla.

Cuba Today sirve como un foro para el diálogo de las interacciones entre los trabajadores y las empresas en Cuba. La industria turística es especialmente ilustrativa de estas dinámicas a medida que la inversión extranjera aumenta,

desafiando el statu quo de muchos trabajadores cubanos.

El enfoque sobre la industria turística de Cuba de los artículos contenidos en este volumen es promover el debate acerca de las mejores prácticas de comercio en la región. Los números subsiguientes explorarán actividades como la agricultura, las telecomunicaciones, y la minería como un ejemplo de la industria pesada. Cada sector desempeña un papel cada vez más lucrativo en el desarrollo de la economía cubana y en el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de los cubanos.

El Turismo Continúa su Crecimiento, pero las Ganancias se Rezagan

por Jason Feer

Editor, *CubaNews*

El número de turistas que visitó a Cuba en 2000 continuó en aumento, pero el crecimiento de las ganancias disminuyó considerablemente. Cuba recibió 1.774 millones de turistas en 2000, muy por debajo de las expectativas de 2 millones de visitantes fijadas al principio del año. No obstante, este número fue 10.7 por ciento superior a los 1.602 millones de visitantes en 1999. Sin embargo, los funcionarios cubanos declaran que en 2000, los ingresos totales vertidos por el turismo aumentaron apenas \$16 millones para alcanzar un total de \$1.917 billones, lo que significó un escaso aumento de 0.8 por ciento sobre el total de 1999.

Los costos en la industria permanecen elevados, lo que preocupa a los inversionistas extranjeros. Las figuras oficiales indican que los gastos representan \$0.78 de cada dólar que ingresa vía el turismo. Las ganancias netas totales del año pasado fueron de \$421 millones, de los cuales cerca de la mitad acabaron en manos de los socios extranjeros en empresas conjuntas de turismo. En términos de ingreso, el turismo está muy por detrás de la industria del níquel y de las remesas del exterior, aunque es el recaudador de ingresos de dinero en efectivo más grande del país. Los funcionarios cubanos culpan la disminución en los ingresos en la deva-

luación del euro contra el dólar americano, que ha hecho los viajes a Cuba más costosos, al igual que al incremento de los precios del boleto de avión como resultado del aumento de costo del combustible.

Asimismo, los gastos por turista también han descendido. En 2000, los gastos per cápita fueron de \$1,080, menos que los \$1,186 en 1999. Desde 1995 y durante cinco años consecutivos, los gastos por visitante han disminuido en 27 por ciento.

Una explicación para este descenso es que Cuba tiende a ofrecer paquetes de bajo costo para los turistas. Aunque el Ministro de Turismo, Ibrahim Farradaz, negara recientemente que Cuba bajó sus

precios para atraer a más visitantes, algunos agentes de viaje dicen tener conocimientos que indican lo contrario. Además, puede ser que Cuba esté reduciendo los precios por entretenimiento y el préstamo de servicios en respuesta a quejas de que la isla es demasiado cara.

Otro problema importante en el sector turístico es el bajo porcentaje de visitantes que regresan a la isla. Las quejas esparcidas por los turistas acerca del mal servicio, de la comida mediocre, y del alto costo de todo desde las bebidas hasta la gasolina, hacen que muchos visitantes de la isla no regresen. Parece que en general los turistas están dispuestos a aguantar tales inconveniencias si el destino es económico, pero Cuba no es mucho más barata que otros destinos turísticos del Caribe.

Aunque los paquetes no son caros, y típicamente incluyen el precio del boleto de avión, la habitación, y el desayuno, los cubanos tratan de compensar cobrando altos precios por las bebidas, los alimentos, y el entretenimiento.

Todo parece indicar que el 2001 puede ser un buen año para la industria turística cubana. En enero el número reportado de llegadas aumentó un 18 por ciento comparado con el mismo mes del año 2000. No obstante, la tendencia general es una desaceleración en el crecimiento del turismo.

Principales Indicadores del Turismo, 1988-99					
	Número de Visitantes por Año	Estadia Promedio (Días)	Ingresos Totales (Mil. US\$)	Ingresos Promedio por Turista (US\$)	Gastos Diarios por Turista (US\$)
1988	225,000	n/a	189.0	840.0	n/a
1989	326,000	n/a	204.0	625.8	n/a
1990	340,329	8.7	243.4	688.2	79.1
1991	424,041	8.7	387.4	948.1	109.0
1992	460,610	9.1	567.0	1,193.0	131.1
1993	546,023	9.6	720.0	1,318.7	137.4
1994	619,218	9.1	850.0	1,373.2	150.9
1995	745,495	8.7	1,100.0	1,474.5	169.5
1996	1,004,336	7.3	1,333.0	1,327.7	181.9
1997	1,170,083	11.3	1,543.0	1,318.7	116.7
1998	1,415,832	10.1	1,759.0	1,242.4	123.0
1999	1,602,000	11.0	1,901.0	1,185.9	107.8

Fuentes: Ministerio de Turism, Cepal, cálculos estimados per *CubaNews*.

Hace varios años, el gobierno fijó una meta de crecimiento del 20 por ciento anual para el turismo y para el año 2010 pronosticó 10 millones de visitantes anuales. Desde hace algún tiempo abandonó esa meta a favor de otra igualmente ambiciosa de 7 millones de turistas por año. Últimamente, algunos funcionarios han comenzado a decir que 5 millones es una meta más probable para el año 2010. Los inversionistas extranjeros en la industria informan acerca de la demora en la construcción de nuevos hoteles, una tendencia confirmada por informes publicados en los medios oficiales. Con las tasas actuales de construcción y si se

asume sólo un crecimiento del 10 por ciento anual en el número de visitantes, una cifra de 5 millones de visitantes por año es más razonable. •

CubaNews es una publicación mensual que informa sobre la política y los negocios de Cuba. Los artículos están disponibles para su consulta en línea en www.cubanews.com. Busque el comentario de Jason Feer en el próximo volumen de Cuba Today, en donde abordará los sistemas de incentivos, la selección de los empleados, y el proceso de capacitación que afectan a los cubanos que trabajan en empresas conjuntas extranjeras.

Encuesta Acerca de Cuba Realizada por Florida International University

La encuesta acerca de Cuba realizada por Florida International University mide las actitudes políticas de la comunidad cubano-americana en el Condado de Miami-Dade. Tres organizaciones llevaron a cabo la encuesta Center for Labor Research and Studies, Institute of Public Opinion Research, y el Cuban Research Institute. Del 20 de septiembre al 17 de octubre de 2000, se entrevistaron a personas agrupadas en tres muestras tomadas al azar, preguntándoles su apoyo a las políticas hacia Cuba: 1,975 personas de descendencia cubana, residentes del Condado Miami-Dade; 400 residentes no-cubanos del mismo condado; y 400 residentes de EE.UU. de todo el país. A continuación se presentan los resultados de la pregunta no. 8 de la encuesta, con respecto a la opinión de la inversión de EE.UU. en Cuba.

¿Se debe prohibir que empresas de EE.UU. hagan negocios en Cuba?

¿Está totalmente de acuerdo, más o menos de acuerdo, más o menos en desacuerdo, o totalmente en desacuerdo?

	Cubanos Locales	No-Cubanos Locales	Ciudadanos de EE.UU.
Totalmente de acuerdo	37.1 %	23.5%	12.4%
Más o menos de acuerdo	10.5	14.7	22.4
Más o menos en desacuerdo	12.3	14.8	33.2
Totalmente en desacuerdo	40.1	37.1	31.9

Puede encontrar resultados adicionales de la encuesta en la página en Internet <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/por> o poniéndose en contacto con el Dr. Guillermo J. Grenier, Director del Centro para Investigación y Estudios Laborales de Florida International University.

Los Trabajadores Cubanos en el Sector Turismo

por David I. McMillan, CHA

Presidente de Venezia Hospitality International

Cuando en el verano de 1994 llegamos a Cuba en busca de propiedades para administrar, nuestro guía era un historiador muy culto que hablaba varios idiomas. Anteriormente había sido un alto funcionario en el ministerio de la radio y las telecomunicaciones; su deber actual como asesor del presidente del grupo hotelero más grande del país le permitió tener acceso a las estrategias y objetivos de esta industria a escala mundial. También era un tallador de madera, pasatiempo que afínó quizás durante su temporada como segador de caña de azúcar, uno de los trabajos que la mayoría de los cubanos tuvo que realizar por el "bienestar del país."

La primera ama de llaves de un hotel cubano con quien trabajé era una ingeniera que fácilmente podría haber ocupado ambas posiciones en cualquier otro país. Entre los 10 jefes de departamento había 6 profesionales —entre ingenieros, maestros, y médicos.

Mi participación en la industria hotelera cubana abarca siete años trabajando en todas las provincias con cuatro de los cinco grupos hoteleros pertenecientes al Estado. Los proyectos que más han contribuido a mi educación continua en Cuba incluyen la administración y mejora de tres propiedades pequeñas en la provincia de Granma, la ejecución de una sesión de planificación estratégica nacional para la mejora de alimentos ofrecidos en hoteles y restaurantes, y llevar a cabo negociaciones finales y el financiamiento de una empresa conjunta para el desarrollo y la administración de 2,000 unidades de uso mixto (hotel y tiempo compartido) ubicadas en

cuatro playas distintas. También he evaluado numerosas posadas y hoteles remotos, un magnífico pero destrozado centro turístico de madera construido sobre pilotes, y cuatro hoteles clásicos de boutique enclavados en La Habana Vieja.

Mi prioridad en este momento es la inauguración exitosa de un nuevo centro turístico de 4 estrellas con 690 unidades ubicado al frente de la playa de una laguna en Cayo Coco, cuya apertura está programada para el mes de julio de 2001. Esta empresa conjunta cubana-canadiense ofrece amplias habitaciones y mini-suites, chalet suites sobre pilotes, restaurantes de especialidad y bares, un salón sobre pilotes para fumar puros, una discoteca, y un balneario ubicado en una brillante playa de arena blanca esplendorosa.

Los desafíos de trabajar en Cuba son considerablemente distintos a los de sus países vecinos. Muchas de las recompensas de los gerentes e inversionistas extranjeros es producto de la interacción con los cubanos, ya sea durante las negociaciones formales y durante las relaciones informales con los trabajadores y sus familias.

PERSONAL DE LA INDUSTRIA TURÍSTICA

Los trabajadores cubanos cuentan con una buena educación y tienen como mínimo un diploma de bachillerato. Aquellos involucrados en la industria del turismo están ansiosos de aprender, son disciplinados, y receptivos a la capacitación. En muchos casos, tienen más preparación de la requerida, como clientes no conocen un servicio de calidad, y responden lentamente a la delegación de responsabilidades. Estos no son rasgos de personalidad, sino más bien es un problema del sistema. Los trabajadores cubanos carecen de una hospitalidad de

alta calidad, pero lo compensan al ofrecer una sincera bienvenida a los visitantes extranjeros, gran cantidad de quienes serán saludados en su propio idioma. Aún a los visitantes de EE.UU. se les da la bienvenida abiertamente.

Las empresas extranjeras involucradas en empresas conjuntas no contratan directamente a sus propios trabajadores. Las agencias de empleo gubernamentales actúan como centros de reclutamiento; escogen a los mejores candidatos para el trabajo en cuestión, aunque el empleador lleva a cabo la última selección. A diferencia de la situación con sindicatos en otras áreas del mundo, parece existir un sentido de asociación entre la agencia de empleo y las empresas, aunque los sistemas estatales son rígidos. Sin embargo, hay cambios continuos y en general mi experiencia con agencias de empleo ha sido positiva.

SISTEMAS DE INCENTIVOS

A través de los años la naturaleza de los incentivos ha cambiado. En 1994, por ejemplo, los incentivos económicos estaban prohibidos; en cambio, los incentivos se daban como recompensas, tal como una cena en un restaurante, vacaciones en un centro turístico, o un viaje de capacitación al exterior. Las propinas no se reconocían ni se aceptaban, y los residentes y gerentes en el extranjero no recibían un reembolso por propinas al utilizar una cuenta de gastos del gobierno. Hoy en día, los incentivos son un renglón más en el presupuesto anual de la compañía. Están, sin embargo, estrictamente controlados por un equipo (la agencia, la administración, y el Partido Comunista) que mide el desempeño y las ganancias actuales. Ahora las propinas ¡Se aceptan y son bienvenidas!

El autor también ha sido Presidente del Club de Centros Turísticos Cubanos, la primera empresa conjunta de desarrollo de Cuba que ofrece hoteles y vacaciones de tiempo compartido. Tres veces ha sido presidente de la Asociación Hotelera de Canadá.

Esta evolución se dio en parte a causa de la dificultad de retener a los buenos empleados en los centros turísticos con todos los servicios incluidos cuyos operadores de excursiones promovían un ambiente de "no propinas." El cambio ocurrió también a causa de la presión constante de los socios extranjeros para que se permitieran los incentivos económicos. No obstante, los agentes de viajes y los operadores de excursiones continúan anunciando que en ciertos centros turísticos no se requiere dar propinas.

A los cubanos les gusta trabajar en empresas de turismo debido al contacto con los dólares americanos que se usan para pagar todo, inclusive propinas. Los trabajadores cubanos tienen fuertes lazos con su familia y su comunidad y tienden a compartir las propinas con sus familiares y vecinos.

Las propinas que reciben no son siempre en dólares. Los visitantes a Cuba a menudo traen artículos domésticos, ropa, medicamentos, útiles escolares, y otros bienes de gran utilidad que sirven como recompensa y agradecimiento por su hospitalidad. La distribución de estos "obsequios" se maneja formalmente, con aceptaciones de, por ejemplo, un líder de la comunidad o el director de un hospital. El Ministerio del Trabajo tiene bajo consideración un plan en el que una porción del incentivo se pagaría en equivalentes al dólar americano.

La propiedad de tiempos vacacionales en Cuba en la forma de tiempos compartidos, que ya fue aprobada pero no se ha establecido, planteará un dilema. La industria de los tiempos compartidos depende en alto grado de comisiones individuales en ventas y mercadeo donde empleados y gerentes ganan elevados ingresos basados en su desempeño. Este asunto no se ha resuelto en Cuba, pero se ha discutido informalmente la creación de un sistema en el cual los empleados ganan puntos que a su vez pueden usar para comprar bienes con precios basados en

dólares en "la tienda de la compañía."

El enfoque occidental más típico de motivación y recompensa empieza lentamente a formar parte del sistema de incentivos de Cuba.

ESCALAS DE SALARIO

Existe poca negociación en cuanto a escalas de salarios y beneficios. Los salarios que se pagan en pesos se basan en la posición, el contacto con los huéspedes, y la categoría del hotel. Después los aumentan debido a los honorarios de la agencia, a las contribuciones sociales (en otras palabras, una cantidad para la pasta dentífrica, equipo para afeitarse, y otros pequeños lujos), el tiempo de vacaciones, el transporte para ir a trabajar, y la habitación para empleados que no son de la zona. El total que la empresa conjunta paga cubre la cantidad bruta que se le debe pagar a la agencia y un sobrecargo del porcentaje para la empresa conjunta. La cantidad bruta en pesos cubanos se paga a la agencia en dólares americanos en una tasa de cambio de uno a uno.

Debido a que el estado se beneficia del dinero en efectivo que ganan los empleados cubanos en una empresa conjunta extranjera, es esencial que el estado mantenga el control sobre el número y la productividad de los trabajadores del sector turístico. Como en la mayoría de los países en el Caribe y Latino América, Cuba tiene un alto porcentaje de trabajadores por cada habitación disponible.

Note los siguientes hechos:

- Los empleados en hoteles operados por el gobierno cubano ganan menos que sus contrapartes en propiedades manejadas por extranjeros; por lo tanto, los empleados tienen más interés de trabajar para una empresa conjunta.
- Los empleadores extranjeros no controlan las compensaciones; todas éstas, incluyendo al sueldo mínimo, son fijas. Sin embargo, los inversionistas tienen alguna flexibilidad en la

etapa de negociación.

- En las empresas 50-50 el estado gana más que el inversionista extranjero. Más aún, actualmente el estado se beneficia más de los ingresos por las divisas en dólares que de los dividendos de las acciones de las empresas conjuntas.
- Los salarios en la industria del turismo han aumentado considerablemente en los últimos cinco años, mientras que los precios de las habitaciones no lo han hecho.
- El valor del peso ha ganado terreno, de una paridad de 125 pesos por dólar americano en 1994 a 22 pesos en 2001. El peso también se ha movido del mercado negro para convertirse en la moneda oficial de comercio.
- Todos los contratos del hotel se pagan en dólares; por consiguiente, los contratos del hotel para el gas, la electricidad, o la seguridad, por ejemplo, hacen que el proveedor de servicios estatal local reciba ingresos en dólares.

Vale la pena indicar que un asistente del director en un centro turístico de una empresa conjunta cubana puede ganar más que el presidente de la compañía cubana del hotel que contrató al asistente.

EL ÉXITO Y LOS CAMBIOS NECESARIOS

En general, los inversionistas en la industria hotelera están satisfechos con estos cambios. Aunque se necesitan cambios adicionales, estos sólo se realizarán si se consideran centrales para el plan general del estado cubano y en concordancia con la ideología socialista. Por lo general, aquellas personas en cargos de alto nivel y subalternos del sector turístico en Cuba apoyan a las empresas conjuntas y las ayudan a trabajar dentro del sistema.

Con el crecimiento del turismo ubicado en una tasa promedio de 19.3 porciento

(Continuado en página 6)

Control del Estado y la Industria Turística

por Denise Sibley

*Profesora de Administración de Empresas,
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En un restaurante en Cuba, puede que la persona que lo lleva a su mesa sea un ingeniero civil, la que toma su orden sea un programador de computadoras, y la que prepara su comida sea un abogado. La industria de turismo está de auge en Cuba y es donde los cubanos jóvenes pueden obtener dinero y esperan lograr más libertad financiera.

La mayoría de los cubanos, sin tener en cuenta su educación, gana entre US\$20 y \$24 al mes. Mientras los empleados en el sector turismo ganan sólo un poco más, cerca de \$30 al mes, tienen el beneficio de recibir propinas que pueden ser substanciales. Por ejemplo, el ingeniero civil mencionado anteriormente recibió una propina de US\$100 de un sólo cliente. La ganancia de las propinas explica por qué los profesionales cubanos jóvenes eligen trabajar en la industria turística en lugar de en su área de estudios. Aún así, algunos están tan desilusionados de la falta de trabajo en su profesión, que salen de su patria para trabajar por una remuneración adecuada en otros países en el campo de estudios que escogieron.

OBTENCIÓN DE EMPLEO EN LA INDUSTRIA TURÍSTICA

Los hoteles y restaurantes cubanos no tienen problemas para llenar las vacantes de ama de llaves, mesero, cocinero, camarero, hostess, ni director de actividades. Sin embargo, conseguir uno de esos trabajos no es una tarea fácil. Los solicitantes ansiosos de trabajar en el turismo, deben primero ser aceptados en

una "Escuela Formatur." Fundadas en 1995, 18 Escuelas Formatur proporcionan un extenso programa de capacitación para los empleados de la creciente industria turística. Concentradas en áreas de mucho turismo, las escuelas se enfocan en el tipo específico de turismo en esa región. Por ejemplo, las escuelas alrededor de Varadero capacitan principalmente estudiantes para que trabajen en centros turísticos porque estos predominan en esa área de Cuba.

La demanda para trabajos específicos determina el número de estudiantes aceptados en una Escuela Formatur. Por ejemplo, si un hotel local necesita 20 meseras, la escuela matricula a 20 estudiantes. Los solicitantes deben pasar un proceso de selección para determinar su elegibilidad. También deben tener un diploma de bachillerato y ser menores de 35 años de edad. Además, el estudiante debe vivir en la misma localidad de la escuela y del futuro lugar de empleo. Por lo general, las personas que son aceptadas por una Escuela Formatur tienen conexiones políticas.

Proceso de capacitación

Sin importar su educación previa (muchos solicitantes tienen ya un diploma universitario de cuatro años), los estudiantes que asisten a una Escuela Formatur reciben dos años de capacitación. La única excepción es la capacitación de un año para posiciones de ama de llaves. Treinta por ciento de la capacitación se dedica a la teoría y el resto del tiempo a la aplicación práctica.

Muchos estudiantes trabajan en sus futuros cargos como parte de su enseñanza y mientras la reciben, la única remuneración que obtienen proviene de

sus propinas. Se les supervisa de cerca, y la escuela se mantiene informada sobre su progreso. No es extraño que se le pida a un estudiante que se retire del programa antes de que lo termine porque no ha cumplido con los estándares de la escuela.

Este proceso de empleo es de alguna manera inescrutable. El período de capacitación parece excesivamente largo. También, muchos hoteles y restaurantes tienen exceso de personal. En un hotel en La Habana, por ejemplo, generalmente cuatro empleados se encargan de la pequeña fuente de sodas en el vestíbulo, y siempre tres o cuatro porteros están a la entrada del hotel. A pesar del largo período de capacitación y del numeroso personal, el servicio en los hoteles y restaurantes cubanos no siempre es rápido. A veces el personal parece no estar dispuesto a ofrecer sus servicios; sin embargo, una vez que se les pregunta, parecen más que dispuestos a ser de utilidad.

LA CONFEDERACIÓN DE TRABAJADORES DE CUBA (CTC) Y LAS NORMAS GUBERNAMENTALES

Muchos de los hoteles y centros turísticos son empresas conjuntas con inversionistas extranjeros, algunas de ellas administradas por la empresa extranjera inversionista. Salvo algún cargo de administración superior, la mayoría de los empleados son cubanos. Casi todos pertenecen a un sindicato, la Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), que representa a los 3 millones de miembros del sindicato en Cuba, organizados en 19 sindicatos nacionales. Se fomenta afiliarse al sindicato, y cada lugar de empleo está organizado por uno. Los empleados se reúnen periódicamente

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con la CTC para discutir asuntos que quieren que la administración resuelva, mismos que los funcionarios del sindicato transmiten a la administración.

El movimiento de sindicatos cubano abarca a más del 97 por ciento de los trabajadores de Cuba. El Estado y el Partido Comunista, quienes también son los directores de las empresas que emplean a los trabajadores, controlan la CTC. El Partido Comunista cubano está basado y representado en la clase obrera. El director de la CTC es un miembro del despacho político del Partido Comunista, la oficina con más jerarquía.

Funciones de la CTC

Los puntos de vista difieren acerca de las funciones de la CTC. Según el estado socialista, la clase obrera está en el poder y dirige a la sociedad. Los sindicatos abogan por los trabajadores en una relación cooperativa con el gobierno socialista. En los sectores productivos de Cuba (como el del turismo), donde los trabajadores son empleados por empresas conjuntas, el Ministerio del Trabajo cubano maneja una oficina especial, de alguna manera semejante a la oficina de contrataciones de un sindicato, misma que proporciona trabajadores para las corporaciones extranjeras. Esta práctica, de hecho, evita que las empresas escogen a sus empleados. Si existe un problema con un trabajador, la compañía lo debe discutir con el director cubano y con el

sindicato. Si un trabajador necesita capacitación o ser reemplazado, éste debe regresar a la oficina especial del Ministerio de Trabajo.

Un informe reciente del Departamento de Estado de EE.UU. presenta un punto de vista diferente. A los inversionistas extranjeros que establecen empresas conjuntas con el gobierno cubano se les controla atentamente. Los inversionistas deben emplear a sus trabajadores mediante las agencias de empleo estatal. El gobierno cubano se apropia de cerca del 95 por ciento de los salarios de estos trabajadores y les paga en moneda nacional mientras que a la empresa conjunta le cobra en dinero en efectivo.

La CTC es responsable de asegurar que las metas de producción del gobierno se alcancen. La CTC no actúa como un sindicato negociador: no promueve los derechos del trabajador ni el cumplimiento de las leyes de trabajo, ni protege el derecho de declararse en huelga.

Los trabajadores que tratan de participar en actividades del sindicato no gubernamentales se enfrentan a ser acosados y perseguidos por el gobierno, aunque en foros internacionales el Estado niega estas prácticas. Algunos trabajadores han perdido su trabajo debido a sus creencias políticas, lo que incluye rehusar a unirse al sindicato oficial. Aunque se han formado varias

pequeñas organizaciones laborales independientes, estas funcionan sin reconocimiento legal y no pueden representar a los trabajadores eficazmente, siendo acosadas constantemente por el gobierno.

PROMOCIÓN DE LOS DERECHOS DE LOS TRABAJADORES

Los Principios Arcos, nombrados en honor del destacado activista Gustavo Arcos quien dirige el Comité Cubano de los Derechos Humanos, procura promover prácticas justas de contratación de empleo y de trabajo en Cuba. Los principios persiguen que a todos los cubanos se les permita el acceso a las áreas públicas, a los bienes, y a los servicios que actualmente están reservados para los extranjeros. Insisten que las empresas conjuntas contraten directamente a los cubanos que trabajan para ellas. Urgen que se elimine la utilización de los registros de conducta social y política escolares y laborales en el momento de contratar a los trabajadores. Hacen un llamado a la creación de normas de trabajo justas, que incluyen horarios razonables de trabajo diario y semanal, terminar con el trabajo "voluntario," y el derecho de formar sindicatos independientes del gobierno. Los Principios Arcos también piden las medidas para mejorar la seguridad del lugar de trabajo y la protección del ambiente. •

(McMillan continuación de página 4)

desde 1993, es claramente una industria que gana flexibilidad en las negociaciones del dinero en efectivo. Esta creciente industria ha permitido también que más y más visitantes extranjeros se den cuenta que la vida en Cuba es muy diferente de como se presenta en los medios de comunicación occidentales.

Pocos países han experimentado en tan corto período tantos cambios como Cuba. No obstante, si Cuba desea manten-

er el mismo ritmo de crecimiento en el turismo, necesita realizar cambios adicionales en ciertas áreas.

Primero, la rica herencia arquitectónica de Cuba se debe reflejar de alguna manera en el diseño de sus nuevos hoteles y centros turísticos. Segundo, en un país bien dotado de arte, sería ventajoso y competitivamente inteligente acercar a la cultura y al turismo. Esto ayudaría a desarrollar el turismo de una simple

experiencia de "sol y arena" a una en la que el visitante pueda explorar los increíbles talentos de la sociedad cubana. Tercero, Cuba en este momento confía demasiado en un simple sistema de distribución de mercadeo que tendrá que diversificarse a medida que el país avanza para competir con los gigantes en el mundo del turismo. Entretanto, los recursos humanos de Cuba en el sector turístico están bien ubicados para enfrentarse al futuro. •

Grupo de Trabajo de la NPA sobre Cuba— “Bases para la Inversión del Sector Privado en Cuba”

El sector privado internacional juega un papel vital en la promoción de instituciones abiertas y de libre mercado y adhesión a estándares universales de los derechos humanos. En virtud de que los integrantes del Grupo internacional de Trabajo sobre Mejores Prácticas de Comercio en Cuba, creemos que la responsabilidad social en las prácticas de negocios puede ayudar a promover los derechos humanos y una fuerza de trabajo más productiva, solicitamos a los inversionistas en Cuba adoptar prácticas de negocios con responsabilidad social en sus actividades en Cuba.

También reconocemos que la situación en Cuba es dinámica y que los retos que enfrenta el sector privado en Cuba son muchos. Sin importar que los inversionistas operan de manera consistente bajo leyes y reglamentos aplicables en Cuba, las empresas deben respetar los principios fundamentales de los derechos de los trabajadores y abogar por el cambio en cuanto sea posible en

aquellas leyes y reglamentos que no se adhieran a dichos principios.

Nuestros principios se basan en los Principios Arcos (1994), en los del Comité Norteamericano de la NPA (1997), en los Sullivan, en los McBride, y en otros principios socialmente responsables que han servido como catalisis para el progreso en sociedades no democráticas. Alentamos al sector privado a adoptar voluntariamente los principios básicos siguientes:

- respetar el derecho de los trabajadores a organizarse libremente en los lugares de trabajo y escoger al sindicato que se encargue de representarlos en negociaciones colectivas de acuerdo con las Convenciones 87 y 98 de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT);
- mantener una cultura corporativa que respete la libre expresión consistente con intereses de negocios legítimos y que no condone

la coerción política en el lugar de trabajo;

- buscar el derecho a reclutar, contratar, pagar, y promover a los trabajadores directamente, y no mediante intermediarios gubernamentales;
- emplear prácticas sociales responsables en el empleo, incluyendo la eliminación de trabajo infantil forzado y discriminación basada en raza, género, origen nacional, creencias religiosas, o creencias políticas o afiliaciones, de conformidad con la Convención 111 de la OIT;
- proveer un lugar de trabajo seguro y saludable consistente con principios de desarrollo sostenible; y
- apoyar el fortalecimiento de los procedimientos legales, alentando el respeto a ser oído en juicio, a los derechos humanos y las convenciones internacionales de las cuales Cuba es signataria.

Pax Christi Holland sobre el Turismo

El gobierno cubano intenta limitar el impacto del turismo en la sociedad cubana tanto como le sea posible. Fuera de algunos efectos secundarios positivos del aumento en el turismo, los cubanos no experimentan una apertura en la sociedad ni una mejora en su calidad de vida. Con la estrategia actual, el turismo en Cuba beneficia principalmente al gobierno [que] espera que el desarrollo económico, junto con un control interno firme, refuerce la viabilidad del régimen a largo plazo. Pero el gobierno no puede controlar a todos los turistas como lo hace con su propia gente, e incluso la sociedad cubana ha llegado a criticar las medidas tomadas por el gobierno.

Reimpreso del Quinto Informe sobre Cuba, por Pax Christi Holland (Utrecht, septiembre del 2000), p. 17; reimpreso con permiso.

Miembros del Grupo de Trabajo sobre Cuba

- AFL-CIO American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)
- American Chamber of Commerce of Cuba in the United States (AmCham Cuba)
- Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW)
- Consejo Mexicano de Comercio Exterior (COMCE)
- The Conference Board of Canada
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- National Policy Association
- Pax Christi Netherlands
- Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum
- United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Cuba Business Council

Segunda Conferencia Internacional Anual sobre "Mejores Prácticas de Comercio en Cuba"

El Grupo de Trabajo de la NPA en Cuba celebrará el 1º de junio de 2001 su segunda conferencia anual sobre las "Mejores Prácticas de Comercio en Cuba" en el Hotel Renaissance Montreal en Montreal, Canadá. La primera conferencia se realizó en la Ciudad de México en junio del año 2000.

Copatrocinada por la Fundación Canadiense para las Américas (FOCAL), la conferencia reunirá a inversionistas actuales y potenciales en Cuba para discutir sobre los riesgos políticos asociados con la

inversión extranjera en Cuba. Los participantes examinarán también el papel del sector privado en la revitalización del sector laboral independiente.

Los oradores confirmados incluyen a Alberto Álvarez (Solidaridad de los Trabajadores Cubanos), Efrén Córdova, David I. McMillan (Venezia Hospitality International), Philip Peters (Lexington Institute), y Matias Travieso (Shaw Pittman).

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dedicada a fortalecer las relaciones entre Canadá y los países en Latino América y el Caribe mediante discusiones y el análisis profundo de las políticas. Para obtener más información acerca de FOCAL y su Foro de Investigación en Cuba, visite el sitio en la Internet www.focal.ca.

Para más información acerca de la próxima conferencia, póngase en contacto con Kaylin Bailey, Asociada del Programas Internacionales de la NPA y Directora del Programa de Cuba, en kbailey@npa1.org o comuníquese al número de teléfono (202) 884-7640.

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